**Draft Proposal on NBDC Key Messages for Discussion**

| **Message** | **Evidence, Explanations** |
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| ***CENTRAL MESSAGE*** | |
| Ethiopia’s policies and programs on sustainable land and water management have evolved over several decades, and are on the cusp of being transformed into a new paradigm.  The core elements of this emerging **New Integrated Landscape Rainwater Management Paradigm** are:   1. Local community leadership based on demand; 2. Partnerships integrating & sharing local and scientific knowledge; 3. Emphasis on learning process by all parties in a linked manner; 4. Creating incentives for success, including markets; 5. Strengthening capacity of all stakeholders; 6. Using new learning and planning tools.   These *elements are highly integrated* – success is more likely if all the elements in policies & implementation strategies are included. *A* ***landscape*** *or watershed perspective is central to the new RWM paradigm.*   * Full implementation of this new rainwater management paradigm will result in substantial additional benefits from Ethiopia’s investments. * There is a potential for even greater benefits from an international program at Nile and SSA levels.   **The critical innovations emerging from NBDC are: 1) the shape & core elements of a new integrated RWM paradigm at landscape level, and 2) tools and methodologies that can enable effective implementation.** | * Definition: Rainwater management (RWM) includes sustainable land management (SLM) & soil & water conservation (SWC) in an integrated natural resources management model. It includes mapping, storing, managing & efficiently utilizing water & nutrients at landscape scales. In the Ethiopian Highlands RWM at landscape or watershed level includes crops, livestock, fisheries, & trees. * Sustainable land & water management (SLM, RWM) is a critical prerequisite for long term development of Ethiopia. Since the 1980s, Ethiopia has been learning important lessons from both implementation & research, & has modified its policies based on these lessons. * Evidence: The core elements are based on recent research & implementation experience in Ethiopia & elsewhere, building on several decades of lessons learned; confirmed & enhanced by NBDC research to date. *Evidence is reasonably strong*. * Much is known about the performance of specific RWM technologies; there has been a growing recognition & policy shift towards more local participation, emphasize on livelihoods & not only conservation, integration of diverse interventions, & adoption of a watershed perspective. However, some of these changes have not yet reached their full potential in terms of outcomes. *Evidence is reasonably strong.* * Recent NBDC work has developed tools & insights that make it possible to consolidate all these lessons into a new paradigm for future policy & implementation at the landscape scale. *Evidence is reasonably strong.* * Potential scale of impact is massive. *Evidence is strong.* |
| 1. *LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP* | |
| To achieve sustainable long-term benefits from RWM programs, **local communities and institutions** must be empowered to take full responsibility for leadership & decision making, based on their own needs & priorities (i.e. demand-driven) & principles of equity.   * The *role of government* is to promote bottom-up planning, facilitate strengthening existing & new local institutions, support achieving equity (gender, youth), & provide technical & financial support, capacity building, & an enabling environment. * A “**farmer-focused, innovation-led and sustainable** service delivery” is the central vision of the proposed *Agricultural Extension Strategy*. | * It is time to move away from blueprints, quotas from above—these have proven to be counter-productive; instead, modify quotas to be outcome-based, tailored to local needs as identified jointly by the community & extension workers. *Strong evidence for need to change, more work needed on best way forward.* * Ethiopian watershed management programs have been moving from a physical conservation focus to income-generating activities & improved upstream-downstream community interactions, which has improved results. *Good evidence from MERET etc.* * Build on the proposed *Agricultural Extension Strategy*. Evidence: NBDC research results support many of the elements of this strategy. * Local research shows communities do not feel fully involved in prioritizing RWM interventions & therefore do not fully “buy in” & take responsibility. *Strong evidence from NBDC & other studies.* * The actual annual program rarely reflects the proposals emerging from local planning processes. *Strong NBDC & other evidence.* * Local institutional capacities, especially for collective management at watershed (landscape) levels, need strengthening. *Strong evidence, NBDC & other studies.* * Insufficient focus on achieving **gender equity** is reducing potential benefits from RWM. *Evidence for gap & potential benefits strong, though moderate from NBDC.* |
| 1. *INTEGRATE LOCAL & SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE* | |
| * A process that integrates local knowledge & innovation processes with Ethiopian & international scientific knowledge, & **encourages innovation**, is more likely to lead to sustainable outcomes than either local practices by themselves or imposing technologies. * Achieving success requires effective partnerships among research institutions, universities, extension & other government services, NGOs, private sector, & communities. * Offering a menu of technology options that local communities & farmers can use to identify specific interventions will be more effective than attempting to promote specific practices from outside. | * Neither local nor science-based introduced practices & technologies alone are sufficient. * Farmers have a wealth of fine-tuned detailed knowledge of their local agro-ecology and have continued to adapt RWM practices over time; some of these have been shown to be very effective. *NBDC & other research--evidence fairly strong.* * Some technologies from research & other places can also be effective if introduced appropriately, but others have been shown to have negative outcomes. *NBDC & other studies—strong evidence.* * Better validation of outcomes through good multi-disciplinary scientific research is needed for both currently recommended & traditional RWM practices *in a landscape perspective* [NBDC Masters research suggests some recommended practices have low returns, poor reputations among farmers, while some traditional practices do improve productivity]. *Good evidence from NBDC & other research and evaluations.* * Integration of multiple sources of knowledge & partnerships are included in the proposed Agricultural Extension Strategy but could be more clearly articulated. |
| 1. *FACILITATE LEARNING PROCESSES* | |
| Effectively supported & facilitated multi-stakeholder “**Innovation Platforms**” at multiple levels (e.g. national, regional, river basin, woreda, watershed) to facilitate vertical & horizontal learning & sharing processes can enhance the positive outcomes of investments in RWM/SLM.   * External facilitation & modest seed funds to encourage innovation, enhance the effectiveness of innovation platforms (especially at local levels), & to achieve gender equity is recommended. * Encouraging a culture of learning from experience & sharing knowledge is critical to success. * Pilot testing to learn to be effective [partially completed under NBDC] must be followed by “learning to be efficient” for scaling up to be practical and to succeed. | * Evidence: Considerable evidence at pilot project level from NBDC and other projects, not only from Ethiopia but other countries. This includes the other two CPWF basins in Africa. There is increasing demand for more effective approaches & technologies, & facilitating learning is one important response. * Other terms include “Learning and Practice Alliances”, ‘Learning Catchments,” (RiPPLE), and “Learning Alliances” (Multiple Use Water Services [MUS] project). RiPPLE was an Ethiopian project, the MUS project was international including Ethiopia. * Value chain approach & innovation systems are the conceptual basis for IPs. *Evidence for innovation systems & value chain approaches is reasonably strong internationally.* * Need for cultural changes--attitudes-- as well as knowledge (KAS theory of change underlying NBDC). *Fairly good evidence.* * Scale up piloting, assess effectiveness, learn to be effective, & then learn to be efficient [Frances F. Korten social learning model]. * Focus includes planners, politicians, NGOs, donor-funded projects, private sector, govt. entities, universities, research institutions. |
| 1. *INCENTIVES FOR SUCCESS* | |
| Getting the **incentives** of all parties aligned is a necessary condition for implementing sustainable innovative programs at scale. There are several dimensions:   * Extension workers should be rewarded for good performance, assessed based on customer satisfaction & sustainable outcomes. * Where the benefits of investments accrue as a broad public good, to other stakeholders such as those downstream, or only after considerable delay, appropriate incentives need to be available to private investors (e.g. farmers adopting RWM) * A market-driven value-chain approach, identifying how to optimize fairly the benefits for all stakeholders while sharing costs equitably will increase the likelihood of success. * “Smart” subsidies can be used to ensure equity, for example provision of opportunities to women and youth. | * Evidence: NBDC publication, “Rhetoric vs. Reality” documents issues with incentives of DAs as do other previous studies referenced in first NBDC publication. *Highlighted in draft Agricultural Extension Strategy* * Evidence on need to get incentives right for RWM interventions emerges strongly from NBDC & other research, and positive examples from other countries, e.g. China, USA. * Community inputs to DA performance assessment, assessment in terms of outcomes may be more effective than assessments based on achieving physical quotas – *evidence based on studies & experiences from other countries, and theory.* * Enhance returns to RWM investments by improving value chains [livestock, crops, trees, etc.]. *Evidence clear from Ethiopia’s own experience.* * Smart subsidies & local seed funds shown to be very useful. *Evidence on seed funds from NBDC; use of smart subsidies shown to be effective in many countries* * Reward innovative cases with demonstrable sustainable benefits. * Effective markets [inputs, outputs] again are key to success. *Very strong evidence globally.* |
| 1. *STRENGTHEN HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITIES* | |
| Ethiopia’s investments in its **human resources** are already paying enormous dividends. Strengthening these investments will further enhance the benefits. The elements include:   * Improve the formal training curriculum (e.g. TVET, as planned), complemented by continuous in-service training, for example in problem-solving, communication & facilitation skills. * Supplement formal training with informal hands-on training for farmers & other stakeholders (including special arrangements for women), e.g. through farmer field days, farmer-to-farmer exchanges. * Make greater use of learning tools such as games, including those developed & tested under the NBDC program. * Support use of well-supervised postgraduate students to obtain independent feedback on RWM programs and innovations. | * Evidence: Improved formal & information training for extension workers & farmers is already clearly paying dividends in Ethiopia; the proposed Agricultural Extension Strategy emphasizes the need to strengthen this area. NBDC experience clearly supports this and offers advice & tools for achieving it. Demonstration sites are useful for peer-peer learning & sharing. * Trained MSc and PhD students through NBDC & other support; their field research contributes greatly to the research findings as well as their own professional development. *Strong evidence.* * The national platform as a means for joint learning and sharing. *Reasonable evidence from experience.* * Learning tools have been developed & tested under NBDC as well as other projects. *Very strong evidence of their effectiveness*. |
| 1. PLANNING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING TOOLS | |
| Use the growing suite of new **models and tools**, combined **with stronger learning processes**, to increase the effectiveness of planning, implementation, & capacity building. These include:   * Integrate hydrologic, water resource, & economic models for planning, scaling out, & impact assessments. * User-friendly tools to facilitate local level learning, training, & identifying appropriate interventions. * A centralized database for geographical and other data could enhance the efficiency of planning, implementation, learning, & evaluation processes. | * Evidence: NBDC & other projects in Ethiopia & elsewhere have developed excellent models & tools that are more use-able for practical purposes and more user-friendly. * Need to simplify the tools, make them more user-friendly, & validate their actual usefulness & impact. *Good evidence.* * Integrated modeling at basin scale can inform policy & planning processes. Examples are Nile Goblet tool, basic user-friendly GPS & GIS, & use of WEAP, SWOT, etc. *Good evidence.* Example: recent work in Abay Basin of modeling & spatial analysis identifies erosion “hot spots.” * Combining the suite of tools with recommendations on process appears critical to success but this *needs further validation* * Examples are WAT-A-GAME, participatory videos, digital stories, Happy Strategies game; as well as WEAP etc. for planning and evaluation. *Good evidence at pilot scale, need to learn how to scale up.* * Currently obtaining data is difficult and time-consuming, reducing efficiency of research and planning. *Good evidence from experience.* |
| *FUTURE: IMPLEMENTATION AT REGIONAL & NATIONAL SCALE* | |
| Critical elements of new RWM Paradigm have largely been demons-trated in small pilot projects by the NBDC.  **Next step: test & validate how to integrate these elements into a program, learn how to implement at scale, & address gap issues**   * This requires support from policy makers, and commitment by researchers & other partners at local, regional & national levels.   *Need to explore potential for a future collaborative program.* | * Evidence: NBDC and other initiatives demonstrate the potential benefits, at a few small pilot sites. Scaling these up as is would be expensive & impossible, given limited human resources. * Therefore, we need to learn how to implement the 6 key elements of the new RWM Paradigm at scale, simplifying tools where possible, & providing adequate training. This is “learning to be efficient.” * Strong policy support & commitment by partners at all levels would be needed. * Need to fill gaps, e.g. missed opportunities from greater focus on gender issues, opportunities for youth, & more work on future scenarios, e.g. related to adaptation to climate change, community resilience. |
| *FUTURE: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ON RWM* | |
| Effective RWM programs at a large scale are rare internationally. However, many countries & organizations have learned important lessons & have much to share with others. Ethiopia is a leader in this respect.  The potential impacts of large-scale RWM programs in the Nile & other river basins in SSA are enormous, as demonstrated by the CPWF work in the Limpopo, Nile & Volta. New institutional opportunities have emerged, for example NBI, ENTRO, AU, NPCA, FARA and the new CGIAR research programs that could facilitate partnerships, learning of lessons, innovation and capacity building.  **The benefits of international partnerships would far outweigh costs**. | * Currently growing interest in promoting better RWM at scale in SSA and internationally, as well as in learning from international experiences. * Ethiopia’s SLM program has benefited from international lessons, e.g. through TerrAfrica. * Benefits not only accrue to farmers but reducing erosion has enormous benefits for hydro-power installations * Currently no effective institutionalized means to share lessons & innovations efficiently & effectively across national boundaries on river basins & continentally. * Institutions which could facilitate the needed partnerships: e.g. NBI, ENTRO, NPCA, FARA, CGIAR * There is a high potential for valuable mutual learning & innovation whose benefits would be substantial * Sharing of tools and methods across African basins; including open access Wiki, is an example of potentially important practical measures. |